

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C., etc.

CHAPTER I.

"Uncle Zebedee can bring the Boys."

The above is an extract from a letter written by Mrs. Peyton, from Geneva, to her sister, Mrs. Short, of Stockton, Conn. Mrs. Peyton had been spending a year abroad with her husband for the sake of his health; and as their stay was likely to be protracted, she had written for her two boys, who had been left behind. She had also invited Mrs. Short's two boys to come and spend a year or two with her family in Europe. Her brother Zebedee was about to visit the Old World, and could bring them on.

This will serve to account for the appearance of Uncle Zebedee in Naples, where he landed on a mellow day in February, *en route* for Switzerland, bowed down with the responsibility of several trunks, and the still heavier responsibility of four fine lumps of boys. Scarcely had they landed when they found themselves surrounded by the lazzaroni.

The air was filled with a babel of exclamations:

"Signori!" "Signoli!" "M'sieur!" "Moosoo!" "Carry ze baggage!" "Show ze hotel!" "Hotel del' Ingilterra!" "Eccellenza you vant good noisy roshif you kumma long side me!" "Come long!" "Hurrah!" "Ver nais!" "O, yes!" "Ha, ha; you know me American mistaire!"

All this, together with scraps of French, German, Russian and other languages which the lazzaroni had picked up for the purpose of making themselves agreeable to foreigners. They surrounded Uncle Zebedee and his four boys in a dense crowd—chattering, gesticulating, grinning, dancing, pushing and grimacing as only Neapolitans can. And they tried to get hold of the luggage that lay on the wharf.

Ragged, hatless, shirtless, blessed with but one pair of trousers per man; bearded, dirty, noisy; yet fat and good-natured withal, the lazzaroni produced a startling effect upon the newly-arrived travellers.

Uncle Zebedee soon grew utterly bewildered by the noise and disorder. One idea, however, was prominent in his mind, and that was his luggage. He had heard of Italian brigands. At the sight of this crowd, all his early reading came back before him. "Rinaldo Rinaldini," a charming brigand book which had been the delight of his childhood, now stood out clear in his recollection. The lazzaroni seemed to be a crowd of bandits, filled with one purpose, and that was to seize the luggage. The efforts of the lazzaroni to get the trunks roused him to action. Springing forward, he struck their hands away, and drew the trunks together in a pile. Three lay in a row, one was on the top of these. The pile was a small pyramid.

"Here, boys," he cried, "keep by me. Don't let these varmints get your trunks. Sit down on 'em and keep 'em off."

Saying this, Uncle Zebedee put the two "Short" boys on a trunk on one side, and the two "Peyton" boys on a trunk on the other; and mounted himself upon the middle trunk, where he sat down, and glared defiantly upon the enemy.

This action was greeted by a burst of laughter and a shout of

"B-i-r-r-r-r-r-r-avo!"

To which Uncle Zebedee and the boys made no reply. In fact it would have been difficult for them to do so if they had wished, as not one of them understood a word of any language spoken among men except their own. So they constituted themselves into a beleaguered garrison, and entrenched in their citadel, they bade defiance to the foe.

The foe, on the other hand, pressed round

them, attacking the garrison with broken English, broken French and broken German, and sometimes venturing to seize the trunks.

Time passed on, and the garrison sat there holding their own. At length they all became aware of the fact that they were excessively hungry. It was evident that this kind of thing could not last much longer.

Meanwhile Uncle Zebedee had recovered his presence of mind. He was naturally cool and self-possessed, and after mounting the trunks, and gathering the boys about him, he quickly rallied from his confusion, and looked eagerly around to see some way by which he might be extricated from his difficulty.

At last a way appeared.

Immediately around him stood the lazzaroni, as urgent, as patient, and as aggressive as ever, with their offers of assistance. Beyond them were people passing up and down the wharf, all of whom were foreigners, and therefore inaccessible. Beyond these again was a wide space, and in the distance a busy street with carriages driving to and fro.

Uncle Zebedee looked for a long time, hoping to see something like a cab. In vain. They all seemed to him to be "one-hoss shays," and what was worse, all seemed to be filled.

"Boys," said he, at last, "I'm goin' to make a move. You jest set here and hold on to the trunks. I'll go an' hunt up one of them one-hoss shays. There ain't nothin' else that I can do. Hold on, now, hard an' fast, till I come back."

Off went Uncle Zebedee, and the boys remained behind, waiting.

A very fine-looking set of boys they were, too.

There was Harry Peyton, aged about fifteen, tall, stout, with fine, frank face, and short, curly hair.

There was Sydney Peyton, about fourteen, tall and slight, with large eyes and dark hair.

There was Noah Short, rather pale, with serious face, and quiet manner.

And there was Tom Short, an odd-looking boy, with a pug nose and comical face.

Uncle Zebedee was not long gone. By some wonderful means or other he had succeeded in getting a vehicle of that kind which is universal in this city, and now reappeared to the delighted boys, coming at a tearing pace toward them, seated in—

Chapter II,

A Neapolitan Caleche.

The Neapolitan caleche is a wonderful machine, and quite unequalled among all wheeled vehicles. The wheels are far back, the shafts are long, and one horse draws it. But in the caleche it is a common thing for any quantity of people to pile themselves. There is a seat for two, which is generally occupied by the most worthy, perhaps, but all around them cluster others,—behind them, before them and on each side of them,—clinging to the shafts, standing on the axle, hanging on the springs. Indeed, I have heard of babies being slung in baskets underneath, but I don't believe that.

At any rate, Uncle Zebedee and his party all tumbled in triumphantly. Two trunks were put in front, one behind, and one suspended beneath. Noah and Sydney sat behind, Harry and Uncle Zebedee on the seat, while Tom sat on the trunk in front with the driver. The lazzaroni looked on with mournful faces, but still offered their assistance. In patient perseverance few people can surpass them.

The Neapolitan driver saw at a glance the purpose of the Americans, although they could not tell him what they wanted. So he drove them to a hotel in the Strada Toledo, where he left them, after receiving from Uncle Zebedee the largest fare he had ever got in his life; for Uncle Zebedee gave him about five dollars, and felt grateful to him besides.

Their apartments were very nice rooms, on the sixth story of the hotel, which was a quadrangular edifice with a spacious courtyard. Around this courtyard ran balconies opening into each story, and communicating with one another by stairways, which were used by all the occupants in the house.

From the balcony a door opened into a parlor. On the left side of this was a snug bedroom, which Uncle Zebedee took possession of; on the right side was another, which was appropriated by Noah and Sydney; while the third, which was on the other side and looked out on the Strada Toledo, was taken by Harry Peyton and Tom Short.

Thus the four boys paired off, and made themselves comfortable.

That night the boys went to bed early. Uncle Zebedee retired last. All slept soundly, for they were fatigued.

But just before daybreak, and in the dim

morning twilight, Harry Peyton and Tom Short were suddenly roused by—

Chapter III,

A Most Tremendous Uproar in the Sitting-Room. Kicks! Thumps! Tables Upsetting! Chairs Broken! A General Row!—Above all this Din the Voice of Noah Short Calling, "Harry! Tom! Holla! Get up! Quick! Harry! Tom! Uncle Zebedee! Uncle Zebedee-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!"

This was certainly enough to rouse any body. Up jumped Harry and rushed to the door. Up jumped Tom and sprang after him.

The noise outside was outrageous. What was it? Could it be robbers? No. Why would they make such a noise? What was it?

Slowly and cautiously Harry opened the door, and looked out into the sitting-room. It was as yet quite dark, and the room into which he peered was wrapped in gloom. What little he could see he saw very indistinctly.

Yet he saw something. He saw a dark, shadowy figure in rapid motion backwards and forwards, and at every movement some article of furniture would go with a crash to the floor.

Sometimes the figure seemed to be on the table, at other times leaping in the air. Suddenly, as he looked, the door which opened outward was banged back with a violent blow and shut again. Harry was nearly thrown over.

"What is it?" said Tom.

"I don't know," said Harry, "unless it's a madman."

"What shall we do?"

"If we were all together," said Harry, "we might make a rush at him and secure him. I've a great mind to make a start, as it is. Will you help?"

"Of course. I'm your man," said Tom.

At this Harry carefully opened the door again and looked out. The noise had ceased for the time. Tom put his head out also. They looked eagerly into the gloom.

Suddenly Harry touched Tom. "Look!" he said, "by the table."

Tom looked. It was certainly a singular sight which met their gaze. In the midst of the gloom they could see two balls of light that seemed like eyes, though there was no form visible to which the glaring eyes might belong. And the eyes seemed to glare from out that darkness directly at them. All was still now, but the very stillness gave additional horror to the Unseen Being whose dread gaze seemed to be fastened on them.

Suddenly Noah's voice was heard from the next room.

"Harry! Tom!"

"Holla!" cried both boys.

"What shall we do? Can't you do something?"

"I'll see," said Harry. "Tom, light the lamp."

"I haven't any matches," said Tom.

"What a pity!" said Noah. "I haven't any, either," said Noah. "Can't you wake Uncle Zebedee? Your room is next to his."

At this Tom went to the wall between his room and Uncle Zebedee's, and began to pound on it with all his might. Uncle Zebedee did not respond, but there came a response from another quarter. It was from the Thing in the sitting-room. The fearful uproar once more began. Crash went the chairs. Bang went the tables. A rapid racket of hard footfalls succeeded, mingled with the smash of furniture.

Harry closed the door.

"If I only had a light," said he, "I would know what to do. But what can a fellow do in the dark?"

"I wonder what's the matter with Uncle Zebedee?"

"O, he would sleep through any thing."

"I wonder if it's a Neapolitan bandit?" said Tom.

"Pooh! it's some madman."

"I don't like those glaring eyes."

"If I only had a fair chance and could see," said Harry, fiercely, "I'd find out what there was behind those eyes, pretty soon."

Louder grew the din while they were speaking—the rattle—the bang—the smash—the general confusion of deafening sounds.

"I should like to know," said Harry, coolly, "how much longer this sort of thing is

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CHAPTER IV.

The Mystery Revealed.

For some time longer the boys kept the door shut, and the noise at length ceased as suddenly as it had begun. It had now grown much lighter, for in these southern countries, twilight, whether in the morning or evening, is but of short duration, and light advances or retires with a rapidity which is startling to the natives of more northern latitudes.

This increase of light gave fresh courage to Harry, who, even in the dark, and in the face of the mystery, had behaved very well, and he began to arrange a plan of action. His arrangements were soon completed. He simply drew a large jack-knife from his pocket and opened it.

"Now, Tom," said he, "you follow me."

"All right," said Tom, cheerily.

Harry opened the door quietly and looked out, while Tom, in eager curiosity, peered forth at the same instant. There was sufficient light to see every object in the room. A scene of wild disorder revealed itself. All the furniture was turned topsy turvy. The door leading to the balcony was open, and there, standing calmly on the sofa, stood the Being that had created such excitement.

One look was enough. One cry escaped both the boys.

"A Billy goat! a miserable Billy goat!" cried they.

And the next instant both of them had sprung forward and seized the animal by the horns.

Then began a struggle. The goat was strong. He was also excited by the singularity of the surroundings and the suddenness of this attack. So he showed fight, and resisted desperately. Harry and Tom, however, held tenaciously to the horns which they had seized. Backwards and forwards the combatants pushed and dragged one another, with a new uproar as loud as the previous one.

In the midst of this they were interrupted by the appearance of Uncle Zebedee.

The door of his room opened and that venerable personage made his appearance in a long night-gown, which reached to his heels, and wearing a long night-cap, which nearly touched the ceiling.

"Wal, I never!" was his ejaculation. "What's this, boys? What are you doing with that goat?"

The boys gave no answer, for they were struggling with their enemy. By this time Noah and Sydney made their appearance, and each seized one of the goat's hind legs. This additional help decided the contest. The animal was thrown down, and held there, still kicking and struggling violently.

Scarcely had they taken breath when there was another interruption. This time it was at the outside door. A burly Italian stood there, very brown, very dirty, very unsavory and very ragged. He stood for some time without saying a word, staring into the room, fixing his eyes on the goat as it was held down by the boys, then on the long and slightly sepulchral figure of Uncle Zebedee, and finally on the disordered and broken furniture.

"San tisema madre!"

This was the exclamation that at last burst

from him. At this the boys looked up, and as they did so with an unconscious loosening of their grasp. The goat, feeling the grasp relax, made a mighty effort and rolled over. Then he leaped to his feet. Then he made a wild bound toward the door over the prostrate forms of Noah and Sydney. The big Italian tried to evade the animal's charge. He was too late. Down he went, struck full in the breast, and away went the goat into the balcony, and down the stairs, and so into the outer world.

Fortunately no bones were broken. The Italian picked himself up, and casting a stupid look at the boys, moved away, leaving the occupants of the room standing there in their night-clothes, and eagerly discussing the knotty question of—

Chapter V,

How in the World did the Goat get there?

This was indeed a knotty point.

Till at length it was unravelled by Uncle Zebedee.

"Well! I declare!" he said, "if I didn't go and leave the door open!"

"You," cried all.

"You see it was dreadful close and suffocatin' last night, so when you went to bed I jest left the door open to get cool. Then I went off to bed and forgot all about it."

That was clear enough as far as it went, but it didn't account for the presence of a goat in the fifth or sixth story of a hotel. This they found out afterwards. That very day they saw flocks of goats being driven about from house to house. At other times they saw goats in their own hotel. They were hoisted up to the various stories, milked, and left to find their way down themselves. This fashion of using goat's milk was a common one in the city. As to their visitor, the Billy goat, he was undoubtedly the patriarch of some flock, who had wandered up stairs himself perhaps in a fit of idle curiosity.

"If it hadn't been dark," said Harry. "If it hadn't been so abominably dark."

"We were like Ajax," said Noah,—

"Give us but light and let us see our foes,
We'll bravely fall though Jove himself oppose."

"O, that's all very well," said Uncle Zebedee, "but who's going to pay for all that furniture. The goat can't."

"Uncle Zebedee," said Tom, "there's a great deal in what you say."

Uncle Zebedee turned away with a look of concern in his mild face and retreated into his room.

(It may as well be stated that Uncle Zebedee had to pay for the furniture. The landlord called up an interpreter, and they had a long and rather exciting interview. It ended in the landlord's receiving a sufficient sum to furnish a whole suite of apartments in another part of the house.)

Chapter VI.

A Joyous Ride—Hark! Hark! the Dogs Bark, Beggars come to Town, some in Tags, some in Rags, and some in a Tattered Gown—A Pleasant Meditation on a Classic Past very Rudely, Unexpectedly and even Savagely Interrupted, and Likely to terminate in a Tragedy—Perilous Position of Noah and Sydney.

The boys were of course all eager to see Naples. Uncle Zebedee was quite willing to gratify them in any way. So they hired a carriage, and found a guide who could speak English—Michael Angelo by name,—and thus equipped, they set out first for Baiae.

Out of town they went through the crowded streets, past the palaces, cathedrals, gardens; past the towers, castles and quays till at last there arose before them the mighty grotto of Pozzilippo. Through this they drove, looking in astonishment at its vast dimensions and also at the crowds of people who were passing through it on foot, on horseback and on wheels. Then they came to Pozzuoli, the place where St. Paul once landed, and which is mentioned in the New Testament under the ancient name Putcoli.

Here they were beset by beggars.

On they came from all sides,—the lame, the halt, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the diseased, the half-witted; idiots, cripples, mutes, in such numbers that it was a wonder how this most beautiful place in all the world could have such a population.

The sight of this produced strange effects on the little party. Uncle Zebedee, filled with pity, lavished money on them all in spite of the remonstrances of the guide. Sydney's sensitive nature shuddered at the sight. Harry tried to speak a few words of Italian to them, which he had caught from Michael Angelo. Noah murmured something about the ancient Romans, while Tom kept humming to himself the elegant refrain of—

"Hark! hark! the dogs bark,
Beggars come to town,
Some in tags, some in rags,
Dong in a tattered gown."

The beggars followed them as far as they could, and when these were left behind other reinforcements arrived.

Thus they were beset by them in the crater of the extinct volcano of Solfatura.

They encountered them at the gateway of Cumae.

At the grotto of the Cumae au Sybil,—at Ne-ro's baths,—at the Lucrine lake.

In fact everywhere.

Still they enjoyed themselves very well, and kept up their pursuit of sights until late in the afternoon. They were then at Baiae, and here the carriage stopped at a little inn, where the party proposed to dine. Here the beggars beset them in fresh crowds, till Uncle Zebedee was forced to close his purse, and tear himself away from these visitors. Harry and Tom went about the town to see if they could find donkeys, and have a ride after dinner; while Noah and Sydney strolled off toward the country.

"Come, Syd," said Noah. "Let Harry and Tom enjoy their donkeys. For my part, I want to get to some place and sit down and look at this whole country. It's the most classic spot in the world."

"It's the most beautiful and the most poetic," said Sydney.

Walking on, they at length came to a place which projected slightly into the sea, and here they sat down.

"O, what a glorious sight!" said Sydney. "Look at this wonderful Bay of Naples; how blue, how blue the sky is! And look at Vesuvius, opposite. There is an immense amount of smoke coming from the crater."

"Yes; this is the place that the elder Pliny sailed from at the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii. And look all around you. That little town was once the magnificent Baiae. Over yonder is Lake Lucrine, which Virgil sings about; on that side is Misenum, where the Roman navy lay. There is Caligula's Bridge! What a glorious place! Every thing that we have read of in history gathers round us. Cicero, Cesar, Horace, Virgil, seem to live here yet. Nero and Agrippina—every old Roman, good or bad—Caligula and Tiberius; and look, Syd, that is land out there. As I live, that is Caprea! And see—O, see, Syd, that is—

"Dateme un baisccho—signori—per l'amor di Dio sono poveri molto poveri."

It was in the very middle of Noah's rather incoherent rhapsody that these words burst upon his ear. He and Syd started to their feet, and found close behind them a half-dozen of those inevitable beggars. Two of them were old men, whose bleary eyes and stooping frames indicated extreme age. One was a woman on crutches. Number four was a thin, consumptive-looking man; number five and number six were strong-limbed fellows with very villainous faces. It was with a universal whine that these unwelcome visitors addressed the boys.

"Dateme uno baisccho signori per l'amor di Dio!"

Noah shook his head.

"Sono miserabile," said number five.

"I don't understand," said Noah.

"Noi abbiam fame," said number six.

"Non capisco," said Syd, who had learned that much Italian and no more.

"O signori nobilissimi."

"I tell you I don't understand," cried Noah.

"Non capisco," repeated Syd.

"Siamo desperati," said number six, with a sinister gleam in his eye which neither of the boys liked.

"Come, Syd," said Noah, "let's go back. Dinner's ready by this time."

And he turned to go.

But as he turned number five and number six placed themselves in the way.

"Date un baisccho," they whined, and each of them seized a boy by the arm. They tried to jerk their arms away, but could not.

"Let us go," cried Noah, "or it will be worse for you."

The men talked with one another without relaxing their hold. Then they tried to pull the boys away. But the boys resisted bravely, and began to shout for help. At this the other beggars came forward menacingly, and number five and number six put their arms round their heads over their mouths. The boys could not utter a cry. They could scarcely breathe. They were at the mercy of these miscreants.

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CHAPTER VII.

Reinforcements--A Wonderful Battle--Disposal of the Captured.

It was in truth a perilous position in which Noah and Syd found themselves. Those ragged rascals, the beggars, were as remorseless as they were ragged. They had the boys at their mercy. The place was sufficiently far from the town to be out of hearing, and though the road was near, yet there were no people living in the vicinity. It was therefore sufficiently solitary to permit of any deed of violence being done with impunity.

Noah and Syd gave themselves up for lost. With a last frantic effort Noah tore his head loose, dashed his fist into the face of beggar number six, who was holding him, and tried to escape.

"Scelerate!" cried number six, and he threw Noah to the ground, and held him down, while he caught him by the throat.

But at that instant a loud cry was heard. There was a rush, and the next moment number six was torn away and rolled over on his back. A firm grasp was fixed on his throat, and a tremendous blow descended on his head from a stout stick wielded by the youthful but sinewy arm of Harry Peyton.

At that same instant, also, Tom Short had bounded at number five, leaped on his back, and beat him about his head.

The attack had been so sudden and so utterly unexpected that it carried all before it. Away with a wild cry of terror ran the four decrepit beggars, leaving number five and number six on the field to themselves and the four boys. Number six groaned with pain and struggled furiously. He wrenched himself from beneath his assailants, but they again got the upper hand and held on firmly. The struggle went on, and they rolled over backward and forward in a confused mass.

Meanwhile Syd, relieved by Tom, had become an assistant also. Snatching up a stone he dashed it full in the face of number five. The man staggered back, and fell, and Tom narrowly escaped falling under him. But number five sprung up instantly, and before Tom or Syd could close with him again, darted off without

attempting to help number six, and ran for his life.

Cowardly by nature, the beggars did not think of the size of their assailants; their fears magnified the boys to men, and they only thought of safety in a panic flight.

But number six was there, with Harry Peyton's sinewy arms around him, and Tom and Syd now rushed over to where that other struggle was going on. This addition to the attacking force turned the scale completely.

Harry Peyton was very large and strong for his years, and besides, he was possessed of a bull-dog tenacity, and high-strung courage. In a very short time after the arrival of Tom and Syd, the would-be robber, and perhaps murderer, was lying on his face, motionless, held firmly down by the four boys.

"Boys," said Harry, who was sitting on his shoulders, "fold his arms over his back."

As they did this he twisted his handkerchief tightly, and then bound it around the man's hands as firmly as if it had been a rope. Tom and Syd were sitting quietly on his legs. Harry asked for their handkerchiefs, twisted them, tied them together, and then directed Tom to fasten the man's feet together. This was Tom's task, and he did it as neatly as though he had been brought up to that particular business exclusively.

The man was now bound hand and foot and lay on his face.

Harry watched Tom as he tied the knots, and seeing that the work was well done, he started up.

"Come, boys," said he, "let's give the thief a chance to breathe."

The boys, at this, all got up, and the Italian, relieved from their weight, rolled over on his back, then on his side, and made desperate efforts to free himself. The boys watched him carefully, but the knots had been too well tied. He then sat up, and drawing up his feet, he leaned his chin on his knees, and stared sulkily at the ground.

"And now," said Noah, "what are we to do?"

"I don't know," said Harry.

"Let's go for Uncle Zebedee," said Tom.

"Yes, do, Tom," said Harry. "You go; and be quick, or else those other beggars will be here."

Away went Tom, and in a very short time Uncle Zebedee was on the spot. Tom, in a breathless way, had told him all, but he scarcely understood it, and seemed bewildered at the sight of the prisoner. It was not until Noah had told the whole story, that he began to master the situation.

"Dear, dear, dear," he said, "and you really were attacked and made prisoners by bandits. Dear, dear, dear!" He looked inexpressibly shocked, and for some time stood in silence amid the loud clatter of the boys.

"Well, Uncle Zebedee," said Harry, at last, "what are we to do with him?"

"That's the very point," said Uncle Zebedee; "the very point that I'm thinking on. I'm beginning to think that the best thing you can do is to take your handkerchiefs back, and come an' get some dinner."

"What?" cried Harry, "untie him?"

"That's about it."

"What? untie him? Let him go? after he has nearly killed No. and Syd?"

"Wal, he didn't quite kill them," said Uncle Zebedee. "They seem uncommon spry after it all. No harm is done, I guess, so I dare say we'd best let him go."

Harry looked disturbed and turned away.

"You see, boys," said Uncle Zebedee, "here we are in a very peculiar situation. What are we? Strangers and sojourners in a strange land—don't know word of the jaw-breaking language—surrounded by beggars and Philistines. Are thereany law courts here? Are thereany lawyers? Are thereany judges? I pause for a reply. There ain't one! No! If we keep this man tied what shall we do with him? We can't take him back in the coach. We can't keep him an' feed him in the hotel, like a wild beast. I don't know where the lock-up is, and I haven't seen a policeman in the whole place. Besides, if there was any, we'd all be kept in jail as witnesses in the case. Now I don't want to go to jail. So the long an' short of it is, we'd best avoid all trouble an' let him go."

Uncle Zebedee's words produced a strong impression upon the boys. Even Harry saw that handing the man over to the authorities would involve some trouble on their part, at least. He hated what he called "bother." Besides, he had no revengeful feelings against the man; Noah and Syd had none. Their victory had made them merciful. So the end of it was that they did according to Uncle Zebedee's suggestion and untied the bonds.

Number six evidently was amazed. He rose

to his feet, looked warily at the party, as though expecting some new attack, then looked all around, and then with a bound, he leaped away, and running toward the road, soon disappeared.

They ate their dinner at Baiae, and then drove home. Noah and Syd felt a little sore. Tom had a bad bruise on his left arm from a blow, but on the whole very little harm had been done, and the boys did not regret that they had let the scoundrel go free.

The opportune arrival of Harry and Tom was easily explained. They had been riding on donkeys, and had seen the crowd around Noah and Syd, and the struggle. Fearing some danger for their companions, they had hastened to the spot and reached it in time to rescue them.

Chapter VIII.

Vesuvius—Ponies and Sticks—Sand and Lava—The Rocky Steps—The Rolling, Wrathful Smoke Clouds—Vesuvius warns them off—The Lost Boy.

The sight of Vesuvius from Baiae had filled Noah with an ardent desire to visit it. All the rest shared this feeling. Vesuvius was before them always. The great cloud of dense black smoke which hung over it like a pall was greater, and denser, and blacker than usual. The crater was disturbed. There were rumbling noises in its wondrous interior, and all around, and all beneath, the mountain gave signs of an approaching eruption.

Sometimes the smoke, as it ascended from the crater, would tower up high in the air for thousands of feet, far into the sky, a black pillar of smoke, which at the summit spread out on all sides, giving to the spectator the vision of a colossal palm tree,—the shape and the sign which is the inevitable forerunner of a coming eruption.

As yet the ascent might be made in safety, though every day's delay lessened the chances of an ascent by increasing the danger. This they learned from Michael Angelo, their guide. So they determined to go without any further delay.

Accordingly, two days after their excursion to Baiae, they went out to Portici, and there hired ponies to take them to the foot of the cone. Michael Angelo went with them as general manager of the expedition. At Portici each one supplied himself with a good stout stick to assist his ascent.

On riding up they found the road good at first, but soon it became exceedingly rough. It left the fertile meadows and vineyards at the base of the mountain, and ran over a wild, rocky country composed of lava blocks which looked, as Uncle Zebedee said, like the "abomination of desolation."

No verdure appeared, no houses, no flocks and herds; all was wild, and savage, and dismal.

After passing over these lava fields, the party reached what is called the "Hermitage," a kind of refreshment station near the foot of the cone. After resting here for a little while they proceeded on foot.

The path was now rugged and difficult, and soon ascended at so steep an angle that it became rather climbing than walking. After a toilsome walk the path ended at the foot of the cone. It arose grandly before them, one side presenting a surface of loose sand, another part being covered with rough lava blocks. Over these last Michael Angelo led them, for these formed stepping-stones by which they might make an ascent. A number of men were here with straps, offering to help them up, but they all refused, and even Uncle Zebedee chose to rely on his unassisted muscle.

Then they began the ascent of the cone. The lava blocks were of all sizes, and lay strewn loosely down the steep side. It was like ascending a long, rough flight of steps, where all the steps were irregular. It was laborious and tedious. Often they had to stop and rest. Uncle Zebedee felt it most. As for the boys, they stopped rather on his account.

But when they got about two-thirds of the way up they grew more excited, and in Tom this excitement was most evident. Thinking that the others could take care of Uncle Zebedee, he started off alone and soon was far up, clambering over the rocks like a young chamois.

Usually there is one side of the crater which is accessible. There is almost always some wind, which blows the smoke away, and on the windward side the visitor of the mountain can stand and breathe freely.

On this occasion, however, there was little or no wind, and the smoke, which was far denser than usual, gathered in thick, black folds, which sometimes rolled down the sides of the cone and hid the crest from view.

Michael Angelo expressed a fear that they would not be able to reach the crest, and as they drew nearer, every step showed that this fear

was well founded. At last, when within easy distance of it, there came rolling down a cloud of smoke so dense and so full of sulphurous vapor, that they all had to stop and cover their faces with their clothes.

It was evident that they could go no farther. They waited for a time, in great distress from the smoke. It rolled away at last, yet still hovered near them, every little while rolling down threateningly, as though to drive them back, and prevent the crater from desecration by human footsteps. They had evidently reached their farthest limit, and could go no further.

But where was Tom?

Scarcely had they discovered the impossibility of going farther when this thought came to all. Where was Tom? He had left them some time previously, and had gone far ahead of them. They had expected every moment to come up with him. But there were no signs of him anywhere.

Harry called out with all his strength. Noah and Syd joined in the cry.

There was no response.

Fear came to them—a sickening and awful fear. All shouted—the boys, Uncle Zebedee and Michael Angelo.

Still there was no response.

Again, again, and yet again they called, by this time in a horror of apprehension.

But to all these cries the surrounding stillness gave forth not one answering sound.

And the deep, dark, wrathful smoke-clouds rolled around and downward, moving close to them and over them, as though eager to involve them in that dread fate which they feared had overtaken the lost boy.

To be continued.

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

A Fearful Search—A Desperate Effort—The Rolling Smoke Cloud—The Lost One Found—Down again over the Sliding Sands.

"I can't stand this any longer," cried Harry; "I'll go and hunt him up."

"We will all go," said Noah.

"Wait," said Uncle Zebedee, as the boys were starting; "we must hunt him as we do in the woods. We can't tell where he is. Let us form a line, and walk up as near abreast of one another as we can get, and yet far enough away to cover the ground. In that way we shall be more likely to find him."

At this the party extended themselves so that about twenty or thirty feet distance was between each. The five thus extended in a long line. Michael Angelo was at the extreme right, next to him was Uncle Zebedee, then Syd, then Noah, while Harry was on the extreme left. In this way they determined to go as far forward as the smoke would permit. The prospect was gloomy enough, but the situation of Tom nerved them to the effort. Besides, the smoke would at times retreat far up, exposing the surface to the very crest of the crater.

So they advanced, clambering over the rough blocks, and drew nearer and nearer to the summit. At length a heavy mass of black smoke came rolling down. It touched them. It enveloped them. It folded itself over them, and under them.

Each one fell flat on his face, and covered his mouth and nostrils with his handkerchiefs, so as to keep out the sulphurous vapors. It was almost suffocating; breathing was difficult and painful; and it was a long time before the blackness of the darkness was mitigated.

But at last the smoke drew itself back again, and the whole party stood up and looked around painfully for one another, panting heavily, and drawing laborious breaths.

"We can't go any further," said Uncle Zebedee. "I won't let you risk your lives, boys. You must all go back, and I'll go forward."

"No, uncle, I'll go," cried Harry.

"And I," cried Noah.

"And I," cried Syd.

"None of you shall go," said Uncle Zebedee, firmly. "I tell you I'm going. I order you to stay here, or go back."

Uncle Zebedee was deeply agitated, and spoke with unaccustomed sternness. "Go back," he said. "I'll find Tom or I'll leave myself here. Go back—do you hear?"

He darted forward, and turned to wave his hand at the boys.

But Harry had already darted upward, swiftly and eagerly. Onward he went, going first to the left and then to the right. Noah and Syd also rushed forward. Uncle Zebedee toiled after them, calling on them all to come back.

Michael Angelo followed slowly, looking on in silence, but with a face of fearful apprehension.

Harry was far ahead. He had come to a place where the lava blocks ended; and where the soil was sandy. Here he paused for an instant and took a swift glance around.

He started—he had seen something. He made a quick gesture, and then sprang away to the right.

All this had not taken many minutes. It was an act of desperation of Harry, but he was determined to rescue Tom or perish. Fortunately the smoke for the time did not descend, but floated up from the summit, so that the edge of the crater could be seen, with a dull yellow gleam, caused by the sulphur that lay mingled with the sand.

Harry had seen a prostrate figure. It lay on the sand beyond the edge of the lava blocks. His first feeling was one of surprise that Tom had come so far; his next was one of horror, for fear he was beyond the reach of help. With frantic haste he reached the spot and raised Tom in his arms.

He was senseless.

And now as he stood there close to the perilous edge, the treacherous smoke which had thus far held back, rolled down once more. To face it was impossible. Harry flung himself down, and buried his face as before, looking up from time to time to see whether the smoke was lessening. The time seemed protracted to a fearful length. The dense fumes which penetrated through the thick folds of the clothes which he held over his mouth nearly suffocated him. He began to think he too was doomed.

And where were the others?

Scattered apart from one another, and thus had been caught by the rolling smoke! They could only do one thing, and that was what they had done before. Uncle Zebedee alone refused to yield. He tried to toil on to get nearer to his boys. He had a vague idea of getting nearer to Harry, to die by his side. But physical pain was stronger than the determination of his soul, and involuntarily he flung himself down and covered his face.

But at last even that ordeal was past. The smoke lifted. It rolled away. There was air again for them to breathe. Harry roused himself before the smoke had all passed, and lifting Tom in his arms, carried him swiftly downward. He reached the place where Uncle Zebedee was standing, gasping for breath. The other boys had seen him and hurried up.

"Let me help you," they both cried. Uncle Zebedee also wished to carry Tom. But Harry refused.

A few paces over the lava blocks showed that Harry's strength would not be sufficient for such a journey. He stopped for a moment to take breath. But at that moment Michael Angelo reached them. He explained that there was another place of descent not far off, and led the way toward the right.

Here they found the side of the cone all covered with loose sand. Down this they went. At every step they sank above the ankles into the sand, and the sliding soil carried them down so that for every step they took, they were carried down the length of two steps.

When they were beyond the reach of the smoke, Harry fell backward, panting. The others scrambled toward him, eager to help him. But Michael Angelo raised Tom in his arms, and said that he would take care of him. At this Harry gave up his precious burden, and they resumed their journey, and were soon at the foot of the cone.

Here they sat down, and Tom was placed on the sand with his head on Harry's knees. His heart was yet beating. There was no water near, but they chafed his hands and feet, and did what they could. For a long time their labors were unavailing, but at last Tom opened his eyes, and drawing a deep breath, looked around him with a face of astonishment.

"What's—the—matter?" he muttered, in a feeble voice."

"O, nothing," said Harry. "Don't bother—you'll be all right soon."

Tom seemed too weak to say much. He lay there with a bewildered face, evidently trying to collect his scattered faculties.

At length a party approached. They were going to try the ascent, and consisted of ladies and gentlemen. Some men were with them who had chairs, with which they were going to carry the ladies up.

When they saw Tom, and heard what had happened, the ladies refused to ascend. Michael Angelo, thereupon, obtained one of the chairs for Tom, and setting him on it, they carried him toward the Hermitage, where they soon arrived.

Here Tom grew rapidly better, and was able to tell his story. Taking advantage of a time when the smoke had retreated, he had made a

rush, and had just attained the very edge of the crater, when suddenly he was overwhelmed by a tremendous cloud of smoke. He turned mechanically and ran. That was all that he remembered. He must have run for at least a hundred feet, for that was the distance which lay between the summit and the place where he was found.

Michael Angelo started off and got a carriage, by means of which Tom was taken to Naples. He did not seem to have suffered any very great injury. For some days he was languid, and complained of a taste of sulphur in his mouth. His coat, too, which on going up was of a dark blue color, had become quite faded. On the whole, Tom had ample reason to be thankful.

Chapter X.

Off to Rome—The Pontine Marshes.

The party remained in Naples some time longer, and visited the surrounding country, as well as other places of attraction in the city. These are so numerous, that if I were to try to describe all that they saw, the mere enumeration of places and things would prevent any descriptions of adventure.

Of course they visited Pompeii, and saw all those wonderful things which meet the eye now in the streets of the disentombed city. Of course they also visited Virgil's Tomb and the Royal Museum, the Villa Reale and the Castle of St. Elmo. Of course they made excursions to Sorrento, Salerno and Pastum.

At last all this came to an end, and they left Naples for Rome, and on the evening of the second day, after a beautiful drive, they reached Terracina. Leaving this place on the following morning, their journey lay through the famous Pontine Marshes.

These marshes form a tract of country forty-five miles long, and from five to ten miles in width. Drained once by the Roman Emperors, they sank back to ruin during the middle ages; but finally were reclaimed by Pope Pius VI. But though cultivated, they are not habitable; and no place in Europe has a worse reputation than the Pontine Marshes.

The road was a magnificent one, and as they rolled along they met the peasants coming from their homes on the hill, to their work, showing by their pale, sickly faces how unhealthy that work must be. At about midday they reached an inn, where they remained about two hours, and then resumed their journey.

For the first half of the day they had all been in great spirits. Laughter, noisy conversation, jests and songs were all intermingled. But for the remainder of the day there was a change.

After they left the inn they began to notice that the air of the marshes was chill and unpleasant. A general gloom settled over the party. Tom held out most bravely, and for a long time his fun and nonsense provoked a laugh; but at last even he yielded to the general depression.

Harry felt on himself the responsibility of the rest of the boys to an unusual degree. He was only a few weeks older than Noah; but he was far stronger, and far more mature in many respects. So he kept warning the whole party above all things not to go to sleep. He had heard that the air of the marshes made one sleepy, and that to yield to it might prove fatal. Fever, he said, was sure to follow. The anxiety which was produced in him by his sense of responsibility, was of itself sufficient to keep him awake; so he found occupation in trying to keep the others from the impending danger.

At first they laughed at his fears; but as each one felt the drowsiness coming over him, the laughter ceased. Then they tried to sing. They exhausted all their stock of songs—school songs, negro songs, sentimental songs, and patriotic songs—but in vain, for the songs were sung without any spirit or interest.

Noah and Sydney struggled bravely; and by incessant talk, somewhat forced, it is true, maintained wakefulness. Uncle Zebedee was kept awake by constant remonstrances from Harry, who, whenever he saw him close his eyes, shook him, and reminded him that on him depended the safety of the whole party. So Harry and three of them, at least, kept on their guard.

The one who gave way most was Tom. Harry had not expected this. He thought that Tom's flow of spirits would keep him awake through every thing. There he was mistaken. For this flow of animal spirits arises from constitutional causes, and when the body is affected it droops. So Tom yielded to the insidious atmosphere, and after a long silence his head dropped, and he fell forward over Harry's knees.

Harry seized him and lifted him up.

"Tom! Tom!" he cried. "Tom! You mustn't go to sleep. Wake up. Stop. Hollo! Do you hear?"

"All right," said Tom, in a drowsy voice.

"No, it ain't all right. I'll not have it," cried Harry, shaking Tom violently.

Tom opened his eyes with a sleepy stare.

"All right," he said, again.

"Wake up. Wa-a-a-a-ake u-u-u-u-up!" cried Harry.

"In—minute," murmured Tom.

Harry then shook him violently again. Tom raised himself with a laugh.

"I'm—not—sleep—o'-ly—fun"—he murmured, in scarce audible tones, and with a low laugh.

"All right—you—jes"—le me 'lone."

His head fell down again over Harry's knees.

At this Harry determined to trifle no longer. He seized Tom by his head, and tried to raise him up. But Tom, in his sleepiness, had a sleepy consciousness of Harry's purpose, and a sleepy determination to keep his head down. So he fixed his teeth firmly in Harry's trousers and held on, thus even in his half slumber evincing that whimsical tendency which was his characteristic while awake. Thus he held his head down, and the more Harry pulled, the tighter Tom held on.

At last Harry gave a tremendous pull. There was a sharp sound—Tom's head was lifted up—but there, beneath it, were Harry's trousers torn from his hips to his knees.

"Bother take it!" cried Harry—"and I have only one pair of trousers in the world."

At this the whole party burst into shouts of laughter. But even this did not wake Tom. His head fell down again. He was in too deep a sleep to be awaked.

"What shall we do?" cried Harry, in deep distress.

To be continued.

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C." etc.

CHAPTER XI.

Frantic Efforts to Awaken Tom—The Result—Obstinacy of a Sleeper—Velletri—An Evil Landlord with his Evil Inn—Diresful Anticipation—Preparations for an Attack by Robbers—The Dread Footstep.

There was certainly cause for anxiety. Tom was not accustomed even at night to sleep so heavily. As a general thing he slept lightly and waked easily. But now he was like one who had taken an opiate, and the most desperate efforts of Harry were of no avail. In vain he shook him. In vain Uncle Zebedee remonstrated. In vain the whole party roared, howled and bellowed in his ear. Tom was in the land of "Murphy;" so far in that land that the voices of his friends failed to reach him.

They, however, did what they could, and finding that it was impossible to rouse him, they tried to guard him from the consequences of this insidious air. They wrapped coats around him, and folded shawls over his face, so that the air which he was breathing might at least be mitigated in its character, before it passed into his lungs.

By this time they had a two hours drive yet before them. These two hours passed slowly and tediously. To them in their anxiety about Tom, the carriage seemed to go slower than any carriage had ever gone before.

At last, to their immense relief, they came to the end of the marshes, and the hill country rose before them. After ascending for some time the air grew colder and clearer. Tom's face was uncovered, and he was held in an upright position.

The fresh breeze blew on his face, and gradually brought with it a restorative which alleviated the evil effects of the noxious miasma of the marshes. Harry shook him, and the rest kept up a general tumult; and at length, to the immense relief of all of the party, Tom opened his eyes.

The sleep seemed to have passed away. He looked around in a dreamy way, but the boys were on the alert to catch his waking senses. "Fire! fire!" cried Syd. "Murder!" cried Noah. "Tom, rouse up! We are among the mountains. Fra Diavolo and fifty thousand brigands are barring the way! Get out your revolver."

"What's all that stupid nonsense for?" cried Tom, indignantly, rubbing his eyes, sitting straight up, and looking around him.

"Wake up!" cried Harry.

"Aint I awake?" said Tom. "I'm as awake as you are."

At this a roar of laughter burst forth.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Why, man, you've been sleeping so that we thought you'd never wake again."

"I haven't been asleep," said Tom, sharply.

At this another roar of laughter followed.

"You've been asleep yourselves," said Tom, indignant both at the charge of falling asleep, and at their laughter.

"O yes, we've all been asleep, said Harry. "Perhaps you didn't fall down on my knees. Perhaps it wasn't your teeth that caught hold of my trousers. Perhaps you didn't hold on so that when I pulled your head up, my trousers gave way. Perhaps I did that myself!"

And Harry displayed the long rent in his trousers to the astonished Tom.

In fact, he was profoundly astonished. He didn't seem to have the slightest recollection of having fallen asleep. The two hours which had been so long to them had been nothingness to

him. But he could not deny it now. He kept silent and looked upon his work in utter amazement.

Yet he was now thoroughly awake, and in a short time they drove into Velletri and stopped before an inn.

It was a small, dirty town, and the inn also was dirty. On entering they saw a long, low room, with one rough table. The walls were rough plastered, and a dozen clumsy chairs stood around.

A number of ill looking fellows, heavily bearded, with black, twinkling eyes, heavy eyebrows and sullen faces, passed out. The landlord came to welcome them. He was a man with a thin, sallow face, evil smile and sinister expression. He could not speak English, and the party could not speak Italian; so they brought in the driver, who could speak English, and got him to interpret their wants. These were simple—a dinner and lodging for the night.

The landlord promised both. After a scrutinizing glance at all the party, he withdrew, and they sat down and waited.

"I don't like the looks of this place," said Syd.

"I don't like the looks of that landlord," said Noah.

"I don't like the looks of those men that went out," said Tom.

"It's a beastly looking place, that's a fact," said Harry; "and those fellows are about as rufianly looking a lot as ever I saw."

"They look a precious sight more like heathen than Christians," said Uncle Zebdee; "but I suppose these here Italians air a kind of pagans. They haint got any real Gospel preachin', and how could they be Christians?"

"Christians or pagans, they're a bad lot," said Harry.

"Did you see how those men stared at us as they went out?"

"Stared? Why, they glared at us."

"And the landlord, too."

"If this inn were in the middle of the Pontine Marshes, where that other inn was, I shouldn't care to pass the night here."

"What sort of a place is this?"

"I don't know any thing about it."

"Nor I."

"It seems a small kind of a place. It looks like one of those Italian towns that we read about, where brigands are in the habit of making themselves at home, and are related to half the inhabitants, or connected with them."

"It's got walls, though."

"Of course—all Italian towns have. That's the middle ages, my boy."

At length dinner was brought in. There were soup, and meat, and various peculiar dishes seasoned with garlic, and a few vegetables, and macaroni, and rolls, and sour wine. They were all so hungry that they made an excellent meal, and then sat chatting for an hour or two. Then they asked for their rooms, and the landlord, taking a miserable little oil lamp, led the way up stairs to a large room, in which there were four beds. This was to be their sleeping place.

After he left, the boys looked all around. The room was on the second story, and seemed to occupy the entire floor. At one end there was an opening in the ceiling, which seemed to lead into the attic. A ladder was placed against the wall here, forming a means of ascent. There were two windows in front, and one at each end. The door was on the back side of the room. There was no lock on it, and no fastening of any kind.

Altogether the numerous windows, the cock-loft, with its ladder, and the door without fastenings, inspired them all with a strange sense of insecurity. Tom, in particular, was loud in his expression of disgust. His slumbers on the Pontine Marshes seemed to be followed by as violent a reaction in the other direction, and he was now the most wide awake and the most talkative of all.

"I'm not going to bed with things this way," said he. "I wouldn't trust a single soul in this house."

"We're in a fix," said Syd.

"No, we're not," said Tom. "Let's make things fast."

"How?"

"Why, barricade ourselves."

"We can't; we've got nothing to barricade with," said Noah.

"What are you goin' to do, boys?" said Uncle Zebdee, who was sitting on the bedside.

"Fasten the doors, somehow."

"Fasten the doors? Why?"

"Why? Because we believe that the fellows down stairs are a gang of scoundrels, and will pay us a visit while we're asleep."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Uncle Zebdee. "Why, I do declare! Well, I think you're about right. I don't like this myself."

"But what shall we do?"

"I'll tell you," said Tom. "Let's lift a bed against the door."

"That'll do it," said Noah.

"Here, boys," said Tom. "Catch hold. We'll fix 'em;" and he caught hold of the bed. It was a massive and ponderous affair, of an antique construction, and even the united strength of the four boys could not move it without extreme effort. Besides, they did not wish to make any noise, and so by putting forth all their strength they managed to get it against the door.

"That's all right," said Tom.

"And now," said Harry, "I'm not going to have that ladder there."

"O yes, that must come down."

"Wait. I think I'll go up there and explore the attic."

Saying this, Harry seized the candle, and ascended the ladder. The other boys followed, leaving Uncle Zebdee on the bed.

On reaching the attic they found it to be a large, unfinished loft, extending the whole length of the house. The window at one end was open, and the other had boards nailed over it. Neither of them had sashes. A number of boxes were lying about the floor; from the beams hung various kinds of dried meats, dried vegetables, strings of macaroni, and things of that kind. They concluded that it was used as general store-room. A short glance sufficed to show them the whole of this place, and they soon descended again.

"If they want to get at us," said Tom, after they had reached their bed-room, "they can climb into that open attic window. The ground is not far below it."

"In that case," said Harry, "we may as well remove this ladder."

It was a step ladder, made of stout logs, and exceedingly heavy. The boys tried to take it down without noise, but in spite of their utmost care it came down with a thump that shook the house.

"Never mind," said Harry, with a laugh. "They'll think it's Uncle Zebdee kicking his boots off."

"I don't like these windows," said Tom. "I wonder if they open easily."

He went round and tried them one by one. Not one of them would open. They were double, and mounted on hinges, so as to swing out, but from long disuse they had grown fixed in their places—not one of them would open.

"That's a comfort, at any rate," said Tom; "but I must say these people don't seem over fond of fresh air."

"Well, boys," said Uncle Zebdee, who had watched all their proceedings with mild paternal interest, as though he was presiding over some boyish game, "don't you think you'd better get to bed now?"

To this the boys assented. They felt secure even against the evil gang below, and were at length willing to sink into the helplessness of sleep. Soon they had all disposed of themselves. Uncle Zebdee had one bed; Noah another; Syd another; while the fourth and largest, which was against the door, was appropriated by Harry and Tom.

Soon all were asleep except Tom. He was still feeling the effects of that reaction from his slumbers in the Pontine Marshes, which had already been mentioned. His nervous system had also been affected by the malaria. He could not sleep. All around him he heard the deep breathing of the boys; and knew that they were in the land of dreams. He alone was in the land of realities—in that dismal house,—the house of those evil looking men.

Now as he lay awake, his fears of some kind of an assault increased. All kinds of fancies swept through his brain. The very preparations which they had made against an attack served to make that attack seem more probable.

What if they should come now! Such was his thought every moment.

Time passed. Every noise was magnified,—every creak, every rustle, every sound struck upon his wakeful and excited senses, and made his heart beat with apprehension. Time after time he raised himself upright in bed and listened.

So the hours passed.

He could not sleep. He did not know what the hour was. He was vexed with himself for his nervousness. He tried to reason down his fears. He tried to count endless numbers, so as to force himself to sleep. He tried to think of falling waters, rolling smoke, and all those other subjects, the thought of which is said to be an infallible remedy for sleeplessness.

Suddenly he was roused from all this—quickly, sharply and terribly.

There was a sound now—an unmistakable one.

It was a footstep on the stair—other footsteps followed. It was the step of one trying to tread

softly; but the old floor creaked, and the noise worse.

Nearer and nearer!

And there came a noise at the door. It was pressed. A heavier pressure followed.

Then whispers!

And Tom, shaking Harry with one hand, kept his other over Harry's mouth, and hissed in his ear,—

"Harry! Wake! They've come! Don't speak!"

To be continued.

BOYS ABROAD.: CHAPTER XII. A Night of Horror--The Anxious Vigil--The ...

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again. At last they sounded no longer; a door slammed, and all was silence once more.

Harry and Tom, then, by a simultaneous impulse, leaped from the bed, and in a quick whisper waked the others and told them what had happened. Up jumped all, and stood in the dark, a dismal, doleful group, staring in silence at one another.

"We haven't any thing to defend ourselves with," said Noah.

"O, if I only had a revolver," cried Harry.

"O, if I only had a hatchet," said Syd.

"I'd be satisfied if I had a simple, harmless, old-fashioned horse pistol," said Tom, with a sigh. "Yes, if it was only loaded with buck shot. I'd pepper some of the rascals with it."

"O, don't be afraid, boys," said Uncle Zebdee; "don't be afraid."

"We're not afraid," said Harry, "not we. But what's that?"

"H-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-sh!"

A sound arose outside the house, which threw them all into a fresh fit of excitement. The footsteps of several men were heard passing along in front. The boys stole softly to the windows. Looking out cautiously they saw three dark forms moving toward the end of the house. The night was quite dark, and the men could only be faintly seen. They watched them till they reached the end of the house, and then Harry and Tom occupied that end window while Syd, and Noah, and Uncle Zebdee leaned over them. Thus five faces were peering out into the gloom, seeking to learn their fate.

What was it that they saw?

At first the three figures were not visible. Soon they reappeared, carrying something that looked like a ladder.

"The open attic window!" said Harry, in a low, thrilling whisper.

The others said nothing. They watched.

They saw the three figures laboriously planting the ladder and raising it. They heard it strike the house.

Then the three figures ascended!

All three!

Overhead they heard them as one by one they entered. They heard their footsteps. They were evidently trying to avoid making a noise, yet on that rickety old floor every step defied concealment, and made itself manifest by sharp creaks and groans from the old beams and rafters.

The boys turned away from the window and listened.

Suddenly Harry touched Tom and Noah, "Look!" he whispered.

A faint ray of light appeared at the opening in the ceiling that led to the attic. They had lighted a lamp. What was to come next?

"Come," whispered Harry, "let us stand here and meet them."

And they walked softly over to where the opening yawned into the ceiling through which the light gleamed faintly down. Here they stood, marshalled in military order by the genius of Harry: 1st. Uncle Zebdee, with an open razor. 2d. Harry with a chair uplifted. 3d. Noah with penknife. 4th. Syd with a stout jack-knife (rather dull). 5th. Tom with a knife, of which he had opened all the blades.

Suddenly the silence was broken. A footstep sounded close by the opening. Uncle Zebdee could stand this no longer. He determined to bring things to a crisis.

"Who's there?" he cried.

The footsteps stopped. Then there was a deep silence.

"Who's there?" he repeated.

There was a little whispering.

"Who's there?" cried Uncle Zebdee, for the third time, in a stern, menacing voice, as though he was on the point of blowing somebody's brains out, if somebody didn't answer.

That last question brought no answer. All was stillness.

"Don't call again," said Harry, in a very low whisper. "Be quiet. They won't answer. Let's wait now to see what they will do."

So they waited and waited, while all the time, in the attic above there was utter silence. Nothing at all could be heard. But the light flickered faintly, as before, and a dull ray came stealing down through the aperture. It was a trying thing to stand thus waiting with the expectation every instant of some formidable assault. As they waited thus, the suspense became almost intolerable, yet it had to be endured.

At length they heard whispering overhead once more. It was continued for some time. The light shone a little more brightly down the aperture.

Then there was a footfall! Then another!! Another!!! And yet another!!!!

"There they come!" whispered Harry.

"Get ready!" hissed Tom, through his set teeth.

The footsteps drew nearer! They approached

the aperture—the light there was brighter. Then there was a bumping noise.

"It's the ladder!" whispered Harry. "They have found that we have taken the steps away, and they're going to pull in the ladder from the outside and put it down here."

This he whispered to Uncle Zebdee. That venerable relative was roused by this to desperation. Once more he called out,—

"Who's there?"

And he called this out in stentorian tones. Again there was a deep silence. The footsteps stopped.

"Who's there? Why don't ye answer? Who's there, I say?"

A footstep came near to the aperture. The light shone down. The boys shrank back, and gathered up their resolution and their strength. Then a voice!

"O, yes! All r-r-right!"

That voice! Those words! Whose voice was it? Why, the driver's! Nobody's else. And those English words sounded passing sweet to those who heard them, and in an instant drove away all their fear. For there was a deep-seated assurance in the minds of all that no one who could speak the English language could possibly be a midnight assassin. So the tones of that familiar voice, and the sound of those familiar words, were like balm to these suffering souls.

"What do you want?" said Uncle Zebdee, in a voice whose tones had changed at once, and with astonishing rapidity, from wrathful menace to good-natured interrogation. He was himself again, the easy, the friendly, the inquisitive Uncle Zebdee.

"O, all r-r-right," was the answer. "It is de maccaroni. Dey keeps him up here. Dey want him for de brekfs. Dey tried to go troo de bedroom—it was fast. So dey climb up here. We're gain' now. You will excuse de interruption. All rrright!!!!!!"

The footsteps moved toward the window. The noise of men descending was heard. Then the ladder was taken away. Then the men re-entered the house. Then all was still.

The boys spoke not one word. Nor did Uncle Zebdee. Each one hastily shut up his knife. Uncle Zebdee softly closed his razor. Harry quietly put down his chair. All were ashamed of their excitement, and yet they had no reason to be ashamed, for they had certainly faced what they believed to be a real danger with very creditable courage.

They said not one word, however, but quietly went to bed. Soon all were asleep, even Tom.

To be continued.

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C.," etc.
CHAPTER XII.

A Night of Horror--The Anxious Vigil--The Three Figures--The Ascent into the Attic--Bold and Plucky Attitude of Uncle Zebdee and the four Boys--Final Denouement.

At that summons, so sudden, so startling, Harry waked instantly, in the full possession of all his faculties. If said not a word, but removed Tom's hand from his mouth, and sat up in bed, and listened.

At first there was deep silence, but this at length was broken by the sound of a low whispering. It was too low to be intelligible, even if it had been in English; but being in Italian it was of course incomprehensible. So they listened without understanding a word. This lasted for some time, and then there was a pressure against the door,—a heavy pressure which made the old door crack in every joint. But the door did not move, for the massive bedstead was against it.

The boys sat up in bed and listened; not a word was said. The whispering outside continued for some time. The thought that only a very thin and rickety door stood between themselves and the ballyhooed miscreants outside was an exciting one, and the boys' hearts beat at a rate which may be imagined. After all, however, they were two as plucky fellows as could be found, and so in spite of the quick beating of their hearts, they sat in silence and made not a motion. Only Harry moved his hand over and laid it gently on Tom's arm, from a sort of instinctive idea of protecting him from the peril that was so close. And it was close enough.

The time seemed interminable, as they sat there and listened. But at last the whispering ceased, and they heard the footsteps moving away from the door, and then going down stairs

"Dis," said he, "is de ancient Rome. De modern Rome is beyond, ober dere. Dis arch is de Arch of Constantine; dis great place is de Coliseum; over dere, dat high hill, wit de tower, is de Capitol. Over dere, you see de Temple of Peace; dat arch near it is de Arch of Titus; and all dat place from de Arch of Titus to de Capitol, is de Roman Forum."

The boys said not one word. They seemed overwhelmed at first by the august presence of the past, and never had language seemed so eloquent as those words of the driver.

Chapter XIV.

Ruins of Rome--The Forum--The Coliseum--A Perilous Situation.

The day after their arrival, the boys set out to visit the ruins of old Rome, and Uncle Zebedee went with them.

The modern city stands apart from the ancient, and they concluded to visit the older portion first; and to do it without a guide. They contented themselves with a map of Rome and Murray's Hand-book, with which they bent their steps to the Capitoline Hill, from which they descended into the Roman Forum.

This place is situated between the Capitoline Hill and the Palatine. Once it presented a scene of indescribable magnificence. At one end arose the Capitol, covered with marble temples. On the Palatine stood the vast palace of the Caesars, and the intervening space was covered with temples, arches and columns. Now, however, but a few vestiges remain of all this splendor.

They walked slowly over this place, pondering over their guide book, and making out place after place. Noah and Syd went into raptures over each, while the others listened in silence. At last they came to a venerable arch.

"It's the Arch of Titus," said Syd, looking at the guide book.

"So it is," cried Noah, "and see, here is the real ancient pavement of the road, the same as the pavement of the Appian Way, that we saw at Cumae."

"See," cried Syd, "these sculptured ornaments of the Jewish Temple. How often have I seen pictures of these!"

"But look," cried Noah, "at the pavement. How many conquerors have passed over this! How many triumphs have gone along here, up to the Capitol!" Then stretching out his hand, he repeated these words, in rather a pompous voice:

"Blest and thrice blest the Roman
Who sees Rome's brightest day,
Who sees the long, victorious paup
Wind down the sacred Way,
And through the bellowing Forum,
And round the suppliant's grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
Of Capitolean Jove."

"What a place is this!" he continued. "Is there any place on earth equal to it? Here, all the past gathers around us, from Romulus, the founder, to Romulus Augustulus, the last of the emperors,—I may say even to Rienzi, the 'last of the Romans.' What scenes this place has witnessed!"

"Yes," cried Tom, absurdly mimicking Noah's tone and manner. "Yes, and me, too! Methinks I see them all! I'm looking at Hannibal. He's hurling his spear at the Romans, who are calmly selling their grain fields in the Forum. I'm looking at Caractacus, Boadicea and Cassivelaunus as they march through here, exclaiming, 'Alas! how is it possible that people possessed of such magnificence at home, should envy us our very ordinary log houses, in the old country?' I see Horace, too! He's singing himself hoarse. Livy is walking about arm-in-arm with Numa and Pompey! Here comes Cicero, with his speech against Catiline, followed by the Roman people with dictionaries to make him out! But who is this? who in the world can he be? Why, raiilly, now! Dew tell! why, it's Dr. Anthon, running for his life, followed by a whole crowd of infuriated Latin authors!"

"There, Tom," said Noah, "that'll do. You've said enough. I'll hold my tongue, after this, if you do."

"I don't see why you can't let a fellow go into raptures, if he wants to," said Tom. "I don't interrupt you."

"The trouble with you, Thomas," said Uncle Zebedee, assuming a tone of severe rebuke, "the trouble with you is, you're tew light an trifling. You're amid the ashes of the past; that's where you air. Ancient Rome was a sizable place, with handsome buildin's, considering. This here pavement seems very respectable, and I dare say this arch looked well, when it was new. Its rather dilapidated now, but what o' that! Think how old it is. They might take the stuff and build a nice shop, but I s'pose they're too poor. At any rate, we hadn't ought to poke fun at them. What you want, Thomas, is more gravity. Look at me. Do I laugh? Do I make

slightin' observations about the ancient Romans? Catch me at it!"

At last they visited the greatest ruin in all the world,—the marvellous Coliseum. This majestic structure, in spite of the devastations of the past, still rears its vast height one hundred and fifty feet in the air, and this, with its length of seven hundred feet, and breadth of five hundred feet, still makes it overawe the mind of the beholder with the immensity of its size.

The outside wall stood perfect for about one-half of the circuit, and on this side it looked most imposing. As they entered, however, they could see the devastation that had been made.

All around them rose the many stones supported on arches, but these all lay in ruins. It was but the skeleton of its former self; for during the dark ages it received incessant injury. For centuries, too, it was regarded as a public quarry, where the stones lay already formed for the builders' purposes, and many palaces and houses in Rome were built from materials taken from this place. Even the walls of the city were repaired from these stones several times over. The stones had originally been fastened together with bronze clamps. Every one of these, which amounted to thousands, was taken, except two, which are now shown as curiosities.

At last, however, a better day dawned, and one of the Popes made a law which put a stop to this pillaging. To enforce this law, the Coliseum was consecrated to the memory of the martyr Christians who had perished here during the ancient persecutions. Around the circuit, twelve small chapels were formed, and in the centre of that arena, which had once been watered with the blood of martyrs, a cross was erected. It is now a place of pilgrimage, and the ravages of time are guarded against by incessant vigilance, and constant repairs.

It was in such a place that they found themselves. In the middle of the arena rose the cross, while all around were the hundreds of arches, the fallen walls, the broken stones and the overthrown columns of the venerable ruin, presenting a scene of confusion such as may nowhere else be witnessed.

Tom had gone off to climb over the ruins to the top. The others strolled about the arena. Uncle Zebedee and Harry were together at one end, while Noah and Syd wandered away toward the other, enjoying their fill of the sentiments which were inspired by the august ruin around them.

Suddenly they heard a loud cry.

All started, and looked around.

The cry was repeated.

It was Tom's voice!

A sudden thrill of fear went through the little group.

For there, seated on what seemed the highest ridge of the outer edge of the Coliseum, they saw Tom. He was holding with both hands, and looking down at them with earnest eyes. It was his cry that they had heard.

"Come down," cried Uncle Zebedee. "Come down!" His face was as pale as ashes.

"O it's all very well to say 'Come down,'" said Tom; "but I'd like to know how I can. The place I jumped from has fallen, and what's more, the wall I'm on is shaking. So hurry up, Harry, and be quick about it."

Off sprang Harry; the others followed, expecting every moment to hear the thunder of the falling ruin, that would hurl down Tom to destruction.

To be continued.

For the Companion.
BOYS ABROAD.
By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C., etc.
CHAPTER XIII.

On the Campagna--Through the Gates in the City--The Buried Past--Its Wonders--Outbreak from Noah.

The next morning they resumed their journey at an early hour.

After a drive through the mountainous country, which presented the most magnificent scenery, they at length reached Albano, and drew up in front of the hotel.

This hotel is situated on a most commanding spot, and the view that is obtained embraces the vast Campagna of Rome. Noah stood enraptured. There it lay before them,—the wide plain,—the central point, in his eyes, of all past history.

In the midst of this plain, in different directions, he saw long lines of high, arched structures, stretching across it to one central point. What were these? They looked like railroads. Could they be the ancient aqueducts? And what was that central point to which they ran?

There was a haze in the sky, and that point was indistinct, but he could see the irregular outline of hills; he could see the shape of buildings, crowded together, and among them he could see, most distinctly, a dark object, towering up above the surrounding edifices,—a dark, circular structure, the dome of some vast cathedral. What could it be? He asked the driver.

"Dat," said the driver, "dat is Rome; and dat is St. Peter."

Rome! St. Peter's! Was it indeed Rome that he saw? It was too far away for his eye to take in any distinct impression of the place, but the thought that he was actually looking at the eternal city, carried him beyond himself, into a rapture of enthusiasm.

After a stay of about two hours at Albano, they resumed their journey, and at length drew near the city, and the gates of San Giovanni arose before them. Here they were stopped, and their passports examined.

Entering the city, they found themselves at first in a desolate place. No streets appeared,—no appearance of a great city, though they were within the walls. At length, as they drove along, they saw before them a venerable structure, which carried, in its whole aspect, the air of remote antiquity. It was a lofty triumphal arch, such as those of which they had often and often seen pictures, in the course of their reading at home.

Scarcely had they caught sight of this, when their attention was drawn to a far larger edifice beyond. It seemed as ancient as the first one, but grander far, and more majestic. Its vast length stretched before them; its lofty sides rose up with tier upon tier of arches; but the side nearest them was dilapidated, and seemed to have been subject, for ages, to the havoc of time, and to that worse havoc which is wrought by the hands of man.

All around them arose other objects,—the memorials of the past,—the ruins of a city, and of a world.

"What is this?" burst forth Noah, "what is this place? What is this arch, and that one over there? What is that high hill with the tower? What is that immense place in ruins? Where is Rome? We are inside the walls but there is no city. There is only ruins. What are they all?"

The driver looked all around, and then turned back his face toward the boys, and began to answer, pointing, at the same time, to each object which he indicated.

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C." etc.
CHAPTER XV.

**An Adventurous Journey—The Difficulties in
the Way—Harry cannot rescue Tom for Tom
has rescued Himself.**

It was very difficult to climb up at that particular place. Harry, who was ahead, went to Tom's rescue with great speed, but at length found his progress arrested by a yawning gulf in front of him. He had to go along the wall for a great distance before he could find a place to cross.

The others came to the same spot, and turned aside after Harry, but when they came to where he had crossed none of them dared to try it. They had to wander on further in search of a place, so far away, indeed, that it seemed as though they were turning their backs on Tom. But still the only way by which they could eventually approach him, was by going away from him at first so as to make the circuit of the fallen way.

Meanwhile Harry had crossed and resumed his journey, sometimes leaping from stone to stone, and from arch to arch, at other times running quickly along broad footways, paved with small bricks. At length, as he looked up to get his bearings, he found that Tom had disappeared. A wild horror came over him; the thought that Tom had fallen made him tremble from head to foot, but only stimulated him to fresher and more desperate efforts.

The others, too, had looked up and had seen Harry mounting the ruins with great leaps and bounds, but no Tom waiting to receive him. And the same dread and sickening terror came to them. For a moment their efforts were almost paralyzed, and then they, too, hurried up with renewed efforts.

Harry was far, far ahead of them, leaping recklessly over the ruins, and near the top. At length he reached it. What did he see?

The place where Tom had been seen, was not the outer wall, but the next one inside of it. Between the place where Harry stood and the wall where Tom had been, there were only a few feet of distance, but that wall was narrow and the space between was deep. Beyond this, he could not see what was between Tom's wall and the outer one.

He looked down into the space beneath him, but saw no signs of any mangled form. There were masses of rubbish, but whether they had lately fallen or not he could not tell. It was necessary to get to Tom's wall before he could see any thing or find out any thing.

Passing hastily to the right, therefore, he hurried along and at length came to where the original slabs of stone lay across the walls, bridging over the space between them. Over this he went.

Scarcely had his foot touched the other side when Tom himself gave a spring from some place beneath and stood full before him. Each was as astonished as the other. Tom treated it all as a joke, but the sight of Harry's pale face and eyes moistened with joyful tears, drove away all thought of jesting.

"All right, old boy," he said; "I wouldn't

have called, but you see I really was in a fix. There, they're all coming. What a shame!"

And with this he waved his hands and shouted at Uncle Zebedee and the other boys, who looked up and gave a loud cry of joy.

"When you see the place," said Tom, "you'll see it was no joke. There was a bit of an arch that I jumped from, and as I sprang, it fell. So I couldn't get back. After I called, though, I saw a jutting stone, and managed to let myself down in such a way that there was only a distance of ten feet below me. I let myself drop on this and then scrambled along over all sorts of rubbish down there. I didn't think of your all taking it so hard. It was a tough pull, though, I can tell you."

With this Tom pointed to the place from which he had emerged. It was the space between the outer and second walls, and was filled with accumulated rubbish. At one spot the rubbish rose up high, and it was here that Tom had let himself drop. After a few glances around and a few more questions, Harry started back, followed by Tom, and soon rejoined the others.

Chapter XVI.

Under Ground—The City of the Dead—Tombs and Chapels—Labyrinthine Passages—A Fearful Discovery—Uncle Zebedee lost in the Roman Catacombs!—The Loud Call!—No Reply.

"Now," said Noah, after they had exhausted the last adventure, "let's visit the Catacombs. We'll have plenty of time."

"The Catacombs? Where are they?"

"They're under the Cathedral of San Sebastian, down the Appian Way."

"What are they doing there?" asked Uncle Zebedee. "Do they bury their priests in them?"

"O, no. The Cathedral happens to be built over them, and the entrance to them is there."

"Well, I 'spose we'd as well go thar as anywhere else," said Uncle Zebedee.

"So I say," remarked Tom.

With these words they set out on their journey. The whole way led them past objects of great interest. The road was bordered with tombs; they passed under venerable gateways, beside ivy-covered monuments, and ruinous triumphal arches, and hallowed sanctuaries. After a walk of about two miles they at length reached the Cathedral of San Sebastian.

The boys had often before spoken of visiting the Catacombs, and all had read much about them, so that they had a very good general idea of their character.

"Nobody knows how far they extend," said Noah. "They are all underneath the city, sometimes story lying under story; and spread out ever so far beyond the walls, just as they do here. They go underneath the Tiber, too. They haven't begun to explore them all yet, although some parts have been all gone over. Whether they will ever get through them all it is hard to tell."

"Why, what's the trouble?"

"The passages are so confused. They run every way. It is an immense labyrinth. Once get out of your way, and you are lost. Haven't you ever heard the story about one of the original explorers? He took a thread with him and unwound it as he went along. Coming to some place, he found some pictures which he wished to copy. So he began to copy them. From these he went to others. At length all of a sudden his torch burnt out. He then tried to find his thread, but had wandered away, and the more he tried to find it the less he was able. Hours and hours passed away, yet there he was, on his hands and knees, feeling for the thread. It seemed endless to him. He grew despairing and fell down, expecting to die there. Just at that moment, as he fell, his hand touched the clew. He sprang up, emerged from the fearful place, and was saved. He found out that he had been in the Catacombs over thirty hours."

"Well, at any rate, that sort of thing don't happen now," said Syd.

"O, I don't know," said Noah, solemnly. "But there's no danger, I suppose, for a guide always goes down with ordinary visitors."

On reaching the place and looking about they saw a priest who could speak a little English. He was the guide to the Catacombs, and in a few minutes he obtained a supply of long candles, one of which he gave to each of the party. Then going through a door in the side of the Cathedral, he led the way down a long flight of steps. Passing through another door at the bottom, they felt a rush of cold air, and entered an excavated passage-way, which was whitewashed. The priest went on, and after a few steps they found themselves walking along this excavated way, which now was no longer whitewashed, and knew that they were in the Catacombs.

The passage-way was from seven to eight feet in height, and from four to five in width; the

rock was roughly cut, and bore the mark left by the pick which had been wielded by the Roman fossor who cut it. There was no light whatever, except that which came from their candles; and this was at best a feeble and flickering one. The passage wound slightly; and they noticed that many other passages branched off from it on either side, but that nearly all of them were blocked up with stone; some, however, were still open and their mouths yawned gloomily, as though eager to receive them into some darkness from which there might be no escape.

Soon the walls presented a change. They began to be all filled with oblong niches just like the berths in a ship, and ranged one above the other in the same way. Their guide informed them in his broken English, that these were all Christian graves, and had once been shut in with slabs of stone, which had been carried off long ago. For in past ages these had been considered as the graves of martyrs, and most of the immense supply of relics which was sent forth to meet the insatiable demand of the middle ages, issued from this place. Afterwards, when the papal government became aware of the historical importance of these memorials, it gathered what were left and deposited them in the Vatican Museum.

As they went on, the walls still continued filled with these cells; but at length they came to a kind of chamber, formed by widening the walls, or by knocking a wall away that intervened between two passage-ways.

The walls of this chamber bore traces of coloring. These the guide informed them were faded pictures, made by the early Christians, and the chamber itself had been used by them as a chapel. For in the times of fiercest persecution many persons were compelled to fly to this place for refuge; and here they carried on their worship without molestation. Every part of the Catacombs that has yet been explored, contains Christian graves, Christian memorials and Christian chapels. It is evident, that, whatever was the original cause of their formation, they were made use of by the Christians throughout their whole extent, as a place of burial, and as a place of retreat during persecution.

The boys wandered about for a long time, passing through other passage-ways, inspecting other chapels, peeping into graves to see if by any chance there might linger any relics of the dead, and peering down some of the side passages which yawned before them on their way. At length they reached a place in which they had been before. They recognized it by the fact that two passages met here running into one, and the one on the left was walled up and marked with a huge cross.

The guide informed them that if they chose, they might return now, but if they wished, he would take them to some more chapels in another direction.

Noah, to whom he spoke, eagerly requested him to go on, and the guide did so. The other passages and chapels were precisely like what they had seen already, and this general resemblance among all the parts of the gloomy place made it somewhat monotonous.

It was while standing in a chapel that a remark from Tom roused every one to a painful state of excitement.

"Hollo!" he cried. "Where's Uncle Zebedee?" With a start the others looked round.

Uncle Zebedee was not to be seen!

In a sudden fit of excited fear, they hurried to the nearest passage and listened.

There was no sound of footsteps, no dull glare of any flickering light.

Then they all shouted, again, again, and yet again.

And their voices rolled in muffled echoes down the passages, but from those gloomy, cavernous ways, and from those dark chambers, there came no response!

To be continued.

BOYS ABROAD.: CHAPTER XVII. Chapter XVIII.

Dodge Club; B O W C

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Chapter XVIII.

**Uncle Zebedee makes Ample Explanations—
From Rome to Venice—Taking a "Header."**

"Uncle Zebedee!" cried all.

Their excitement, and the flush of joy which was on their faces, told the whole story.

Uncle Zebedee was full of remorse. His explanation was a simple one. When they had got back to the cross, on their first round, he was very tired, and afraid of rheumatism.

"I knowed that cross," said he. "I've got an eye that's ben trained in the woods. Any body would have noted that cross, an' me in particular. I saw that the entrance wa'n't over a hundred yards from that. I heard the priest offer to go another round, and you all wanted to go. I hadn't the heart to stop you. You were all enjoyin' it at a rate that was a wonder to me, and I knew that if I said I was fagged out, you'd all come back with me. I knew, too, that the place was safe, and that the stories were all bugbears. For I asked the guide in one of the chapels about them small, open passages, an' he told me they led nowhere. He told me nobody could get lost, so I had no anxiety about you. Whereupon, as you started, off I slipped, and here I've ben, takin' my ease ever sence, and wondered what's keepin' you so long."

"Uncle Zebedee," said Tom, in a solemn, sepulchral voice, "this will be a warning to me. After this, I will never let you go out of my sight."

The party remained in Rome for about a week, during which time they visited all the objects of interest; though, of course, in so short a period it was not possible to do more than glance at the vast collection of wonders, which are accumulated in the eternal city.

There were the churches and cathedrals, among which the vast fabric of St. Peter's attracted their chief attention and admiration. There were the palaces, with their galleries of painting and sculpture, through which they walked till they felt bewildered by the riches of art, that were heaped around them in such profusion. They would have liked to remain a far longer time, but this was impossible.

At length they set out for Florence. They travelled in a hired carriage, for the purpose of seeing the country, and took the road by Perugia. On this journey they passed through a country, which was full of the charm of historic associations, where they beheld the tombs of old Etrurians, and gazed upon the scene of Hannibal's victory at Lake Thrasymene.

They remained two or three days at Florence, where they saw a cathedral that rivals St. Peter's in grandeur, and museums of art that vie with those of Rome.

Then they went on.

Bologna, Ferrara and Padua were passed through without any long delay, and at length they reached Venice.

It would be difficult to describe the sensations which they experienced, as they found themselves in this extraordinary city.

It is a city that rises out of the sea. The streets are canals; the carriages boats. The cabs, the omnibuses, the barouches, the carryalls, the buggies, the phaetons, the one horse "shays," the coaches, the drays, the trucks, the hand carts, the go carts, the velocipedes, the wheelbarrows, the teams, the perambulators,—in fact all the various species of vehicles, which in every other city on the globe go on wheels, here in Venice, go on *keels*. "The only horses," as an Irishman once remarked, "are men, and the only rail dry land is all wather, so it is."

They stayed here a week, in spite of Uncle Zebedee's anxiety to go on; and saw every place of interest in this wonderful city, but thought no single object was to be compared to the city itself. They saw the cathedral of St. Mark, where magnificence and decay are so strikingly blended. They saw the spot on which Frederic Barbarossa knelt and did homage to the Pope. They visited the Doge's palace, ascended the "Giant's Stair," looked into the "Lion's Mouth," inspected the Hall of the Inquisition, passed over the Bridge of Sighs, and descended into the terrible dungeons of the Inquisition. Here they found three tiers of cells, the upper ones of which had once been reserved for mere murderers; but the lowest for heretics, where, below the surface of the sea, they might live a living death. All the horrors of the place, now exposed to the public eye, they saw, and shuddered, and were glad to escape from such hideous scenes to the upper air.

During their stay in Venice, Tom had been subject to a strong temptation. It was all the fault of the salt water, which filled him with an irrepressible desire to have a swim. He had not been able to manage this, but at last, as the time of their departure drew near, he grew desperate, and determined to accomplish it somehow. So, on the morning of their last day, he got up early,

and in rather scant clothing went down stairs. The door was unlocked, he passed out, and in a few moments he had divested himself of the little clothing which had covered him.

Then he stood for an instant and looked at the canal beneath.

Then he raised his arms, and took a header straight into the turbid wave.

Rising, he struck out and swam toward the grand canal, which was not very far distant. This he reached. He swam across it. Then he struck out to return.

But when he was about half way across, on his homeward journey, he heard a sound which made him turn his head.

He saw a sight which filled him with consternation.

It was a police boat.

What was worse, it was coming straight toward him.

The only thing that he could do was to try and get away. And this he did do. He struck out vigorously. But alas! he was distant from the hotel, and the boat was near, and it could move much more quickly than he could. Tom labored hard. The water foamed around him, and behind him, yet still that terrible police boat kept on his track, and gained on him rapidly.

At last Tom reached the side of the grand canal, just where the entrance was to his own canal.

The police boat was close behind him.

He struck out wildly. No use. The next instant the police boat was beside him, and a strong hand had seized him by his hair.

To be continued.

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C.," etc.
CHAPTER XVII.

Re-assurances from the Guide—Puzzle is Followed by a Gleam of Light—The Discovery of the Lost One—His Attitude on the Occasion.

"Do not fear," said the guide, as soon as he could make himself heard. "It is nothing."

"But he's lost! he's gone astray!" cried Noah, in indescribable agitation; "we'll never see him again! Harry! let's hunt him up!"

"But I say—it is nothing—no mattaire. Allaright."

"Can we find him?"

"Easy. Allaright. Be quiet; do not be distressed."

A feeling of relief came over them at these words. The guide led the way back calmly, to the place where the blocked path was, with the huge cross; and then turned down the passage which they had traversed first. They went over their first route, looking carefully at every place, and calling at every passage way. At last they came back by their old path to the cross.

In their journey they had seen no sign of the lost one. Not a voice was heard responsive to their cries of distress. The darkest fears came over the boys. What to do they knew not.

On reaching the cross, the guide stopped and looked up and down the passages in silence. The boys saw a puzzled expression on his face, and the sight of this made their hearts sink within them.

At last he spoke.

"You are certain dat ho come into dis place?"

"O yes."

"Perhaps he stay behind. Ha?"

"No," said Tom, sadly, "for I was walking behind him all the way to the first chapel. That was beyond this place. After that he made me go first, for fear I'd be lost."

"Him," said the guide.

He stood in deep thought, with a still more puzzled face.

"O," said Noah, "don't let us waste our time; let us be off again."

"But we have been, and he is not dere," said the guide.

"Then let us go to another place."

"Dere is no oder."

"He has wandered off into some side passage, and lost his way. O come. Even now he is bewildered in trying to find his way back to us."

"But dere is no place to wander," said the guide.

"Why yes, there is,—we passed them,—lots of little passages."

"Dem; O, dat is noting. Dey all leetle ones. Dey go nowher. All stopped up. Nobody could go more dan dozen foot—noting. We haf been over de whole. Nobody can pass into oder parts from here—all shut up wit walls an doors."

"Is that really so?" cried Noah, with great relief.

"It is so. An now I tell you whar he is. He haf gone home."

"Gone back?"

"Yes. Not possible to go any whar else. He gone back. Tired, hungry, or any ting. Come."

The guide started off again, and before long reached the door which led into the stairway.

He opened it. The boys burst through. A cry escaped them; for there, calmly seated on the steps, calmly leaning against the wall, in a particularly easy attitude—theru they saw Uncle Zebedee!!!!!!

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD. ■

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C., " etc.
CHAPTER XIX.

A Conversation under very Embarrassing Circumstances—Tom in the Water Confronted by the Venetian Police in the Boat—Held by the Hair—A New Dodge—A Sudden Jerk and Successful Escape.

As Tom felt the grasp of the hand on his hair, he tried to dive.

No use.

The hand held his head firmly, and, out of breath with his exertions, he was compelled to yield. Tom supported himself by clinging to the boat, and the hand did not relax its grasp.

Three men were in the boat, and regarding Tom sternly, one of them said something to him.

He did not understand it, of course.

"Really," said he, "I am quite mortified, but I don't understand a word you said."

But this was unintelligible to the Italians. They tried again. They spoke French. No use. They even tried German. A failure.

"He must be English," they said,—"or Russian."

But the position was by no means a pleasant one for Tom, who found the water rather enjoyable when he was dashing about in the freedom of nature, but a very different thing when floating on it as a captive. He understood, at that moment, the sorrows of the captured trout, the hooked salmon, the speared eel, the netted shad. "You might as well have a hook in your gills," said he, afterward, "as have a hand clutching your hair."

He was too sensible, however, to make any struggle. He awaited the action of his captors, trusting that the future would afford some opportunity of escape.

His captors, on their part, did not know what to do. He was a foreigner, and therefore he might be a person of importance. This thing might have been done through ignorance. How could they get him into the boat? They did not want to run the risk of offering unnecessary insult to one, who might be, perhaps, an English milord, or a Russian prince,—prince, milord, or beggar,—he might be any one of these, for he floated before them as nature made him, and without any adventitious surroundings.

At last, Tom made some gestures, which plainly conveyed the idea of clothing himself. He then pointed to his hotel. The quick-witted Italians, who, of all men, are perhaps most ready in the comprehension of the language of gesture, at once caught his meaning. The boat moved slowly along toward the hotel, while Tom moved slowly after it. At length they reached the place where the steps ran down to the water. On the lower steps Tom stood, up to his waist in water, and made gestures to signify that his clothes were up there, behind the door.

The Italians seemed to understand him. The boat drew nearer. The grasp on Tom's hair relaxed. One of the men prepared to step out. At that instant Tom jerked his head free. With a bound he leaped up. The man sprang after him into the water. But Tom had the start. He was too quick for his pursuer. To rush through the door, to bang it in the faces of the police, and to bar it against them, was the work of an instant. The next instant he had slipped on his loose attire.

A few moments more, and he was safe in his room, telling his story to his astonished friends.

The police lingered awhile in doubt, and then silently withdrew. They concluded that, on the whole, it would be safest, and best, and most sensible, for them to pursue the matter no further.

Chapter XX.

On the Road Once More—The Distant Alps—Over the Alps—The Lake Maggiore—The Hanging Gardens—The Giant Statue—Domo d'Ossola—Detained—Further On—Snowed Up—On Again—A Perilous Journey—Avalanches—Fearful Disaster.

On the day following Tom's adventure in the canal, the party resumed their journey. The railway train bore them swiftly along that great bridge which passes over the waters of the sea, connecting Venice with the main land;—on through the green fields of Venetia, toward the wide plains of Lombardy. City after city was passed, many of which were associated with the recollections of the past. They did not stop at any of them, however. Having now seen Venice, they could not hope for any other Italian city of commanding interest. It is true, Milan lay before them, but after Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice, what is Milan? They did not look forward to it with any of that eager and passionate interest, which their approach to these other places had roused within them.

Besides, they had other things to think of. As they rolled along over the plains of Venetia and Lombardy, there appeared far to the North the giant forms of the Alps, whose snow-white summits stretched along the horizon. Behind that lofty barrier lay the place where dear friends were waiting for them. Beyond that lofty snow-covered range lay Geneva. The sight of this barrier served to bring them nearer to their loved ones, and every thing else began to lose its interest beside objects so dear as these. They could not think of making any stay now. Their whole desire was to push onward, cross the Alps, and join their friends.

From Milan the Simplon road goes across the Alps, and by this route they were to proceed to Geneva.

The road presented but few objects of interest until they reached the Lake Maggiore. Here a wonderful scene spread before them. The broad lake extended far away, surrounded by green shores; while in the distance rose the giant Alps, their summits covered with snow.

On the bosom of this lovely lake, there were two small islands, which seemed like the creation of some enchantment. Their names were Isola Bella, and Isola Madre. Each one was covered with hanging gardens, which rose up on terrace above terrace, and, at a distance, resembled those fanciful pictures, which are made of the hanging gardens of Babylon.

On these terraced gardens there grew a profusion of richest vegetation; tall tropical trees being intermingled with those of colder zone, and all surrounded and undergrown with a dense growth of shrubbery, whose deep green contrasted with the lighter hue of the loftier trees.

The effect of the whole scene was of a kind which can never be forgotten. Here were the widest extremes of sublimity and beauty; rocky precipices, and green sloping shores; snow-clad Alps piercing the clouds, and fairy islets reflected in the glassy wave.

Now, as they rode on, they saw full before them a giant figure. They looked at it as the Lilliputians looked at Gulliver. It was a figure of enormous size, arrayed in the robes of a priest, looking toward the lake, with his hand outstretched, as if in the act of blessing. As they drew nearer, the figure became gradually vealed.

It proved to be a vast colossal statue, representing St. Carlo Borromeo, which was reared on an elevated pedestal, on the shore of the lake, and close by the roadside. The figure is built of stone, surrounded by a bronze covering. It is sixty feet in height, and as the pedestal is forty feet high, the whole altitude is one hundred feet. At the base of the pedestal is a door, by which an ascent may be made to the top. The coach stopped here to give the passengers an opportunity of ascending, and our party gladly availed themselves of the chance.

Inside they found a long flight of steps, which led up to the head. It was lighted in different places by narrow slits, and the ascent was not at

all difficult. The wonder of the thing was, that they were, so to speak, inside of a colossal man. Their wonder burst forth when they reached the head, and stood inside of it.

There was room for them all. Uncle Zebedee seated himself in the hollow that was made by the projecting nose. Harry and Tom stood each by an eye, looking down upon Lake Maggiore, and Noah and Syd waited till their turn might come for looking out. The consciousness of being inside the head of a bronze statue was peculiar, and as they looked out through the eyes, the sensation was terrific.

After leaving this, the road began to ascend slightly, and the Alps were slowly approached. The towering forms of these sublime mountains upreared themselves, range behind range, covered with glittering snow, which reflected back the rays of the sun, and dazzled their eyes as they gazed.

At length they began to enter among the hills; and the lower declivities of the mountainous country, and the lesser heights around shut out the glory of the grander eminences beyond. The road wound along, sometimes with a roaring brook dashing beside it; at other times crossing the brook by a bridge; again rounding a hill and going off for miles to return again to this brook.

Before evening they reached Domo d'Ossola. This is on the southern side of the Alps, and is a thoroughly Italian town. The houses, the churches, the hotels, are all in the Italian style. Around it are the lofty mountains, but in the town there is the glare of sunshine, and the brightness of the southern atmosphere.

Here they passed the night, and on the following morning proceeded on their journey. The road ascended, but with a very slight incline. To avoid steep ascents it winds round in a wonderful manner, sometimes crossing deep gullies on stupendous bridges, at other times passing through long tunnels, which have been excavated in the solid rock.

At first they did not see so much of these great engineering works, but before their journey was accomplished they had seen enough to understand why the Simplon had gained its world-wide fame, as the "Colossus of Roads."

As they drove along they saw that every step brought them steadily nearer to the line of snow, and at length they found the road itself covered with a thin white mantle. Over this they rolled, and though the snow became steadily deeper, yet they met with little difficulty until they approached the first station, where they expected to change horses.

Here they encountered a deep drift. A path had been shovelled through this, so that they went on without any difficulty; but the sight of this served to show them what might be expected in those regions which they were only entering, and to fill them all with great doubts as to the practicability of their journey.

On reaching the station these doubts were confirmed. They were informed that the road was covered so deep with snow that it was impassable; that men had been working on it for two days, but were not yet done, and that they would have to wait some time before proceeding. The worst of it was that there was every probability of another storm, which would heap up the snow still higher, and render impassable even those places which had been cleared away. They were therefore compelled to wait.

For two days they stayed there, in this little wayside inn, amusing themselves with looking out at the scene before them. All around them the ground was covered with snow. Above them towered the Alps, with their vast white summits, where the wild wind blew, hurling the snow wreaths into the air.

Beneath was a deep ravine, at the bottom of which a torrent ran, and whose sides presented a spectacle of the most savage grandeur. It was not possible to go about to any distance over that deep snow. Their boots were made for lighter purposes than plunging through drifts; and so they were forced to remain in doors, and do the best that they could to pass away the time.

On the third day, however, a start was made. On going out they found that the diligence was to be left behind, further progress on wheels being impossible. In its place there were several sleds which looked exactly like those with which they were familiar at home.

Each sled was drawn by one horse, and had straw spread over it. One sled carried the luggage. This went last. Tom insisted on going in the first one, and the others did not oppose his wishes. Harry went with him. These with the driver formed the first load. Next came Noah and Syd with their driver. Then Uncle Zebedee and a German with theirs. Then two Frenchmen. Then a priest and a woman. Last of all came the luggage. So they started.

The road had been cut out through the snow for a long distance, so as to make their passage practicable. They wound about among the mountains; sometimes they came to long tunnels, called galleries, where the road avoided the danger of falling avalanches; at other times it passed over bridges, and turned in and out and in again with innumerable windings.

At length they came to the Gorge of Gondo. This is a narrow chasm, the sides of which rise up almost precipitously for many thousand feet. At the bottom flows a furious torrent. The road had been formed on one side, and here as they passed along they could look up at the tremendous height above them; and down at the still more tremendous abyss beneath them.

Nor was this journey without danger. At times, before them and behind them, there would come a low rumbling sound, and down the steep declivity they would see a mass of snow and ice rushing headlong to the abyss beneath.

Many times they had to get off the sledges, and get them over the heaps that these falling avalanches had formed over the road. Fortunately, however, none of these came near them, and so they pushed forward, eager to get on as fast as possible.

At length the Gorge of Gondo grew less formidable. The abyss beneath was not so fearful, the heights above, though lofty, were not so precipitous. Here they could see the distant outline of the little village of Simplon, that stands almost at the top of the pass.

As they went on the snow grew deeper. Poles projected above its surface. Harry's driver, who could speak a little English, told him that the snow on the highest part was forty feet in depth, and that here it was thirty-five. Their pathway was about four feet wide, cut in a smooth slope of snow that had filled in the road to an equality with the mountain declivity. The depth below was at least a thousand feet. Here and there rocks and trees jutted out, and interrupted the smooth white surface.

Here they drove along.

When suddenly, before them, and above them, and all around them, there arose a deep, low, dull, rushing sound, which seemed as if all the snow on the slope was moving. Harry's driver whipped up his horses, furiously. The others held back, and cried out to the passengers to look out for their lives.

An avalanche was coming! It was coming somewhere down the slope which they were traversing, but where, no one knew.

But they knew soon enough.

For Harry's driver, in whipping up his horses, had forced them forward into the midst of it.

And down it came,—a vast mass of snow and ice. Down it came, irresistibly, tremendously, with a force that nothing could withstand! The others looked on, voiceless, with horror, and spellbound. It came! It struck! and the next instant down went the sled that carried Harry and Tom, over the edge of the slope, and downward to the abyss. A shriek burst forth from Noah and Syd. Then all was still.

To be continued.

For the Companion.

BOYS ABROAD.

By the Author of "Dodge Club," "B. O. W. C., etc.
CHAPTER XXI.

**Horror—Efforts to Recover the Lost Ones—
A Perilous Descent—The Icy Slope—Will the
Rope be Long Enough?—A Critical Moment
—The Question Solved.**

The shriek that rang out from Noah and Syd died away in the silence of utter horror. The whole party stood spellbound, gazing at the ruin before them, where the resistless avalanche was hurrying down the lost ones to the abyss beneath.

The descent was very steep, and was a smooth white surface for five hundred feet. Then there were fissures, which dotted the expanse of snow, and grew denser farther down. But the way in which the avalanche was moving seemed to lead past this grove.

The depth was fearful, and far down there was a line of shade, that looked as though at that place there might be the edge of a precipice. Along this were other trees and occasionally a sharp rock.

All this flashed upon their eyes in an instant. As they looked the sliding mass hurried on in its downward career, bearing with it those who were so precious to the horror-stricken friends above.

Downward it bore them, downward and still farther downward in a confused mass. They had seen Harry stand erect, clinging to a stake in the sled. They had seen Tom throw himself prostrate, holding on. They had seen the driver fling himself off the sled altogether. In this way they were borne past the place where the grove was, until at last, speeding on, they descended so far that the projecting trees on the upper and farther edge of the grove intervened and hid them from view.

A deep groan burst from Uncle Zebedee. Noah and Syd, who had been in the nearest sled, stood with white lips and faces of agony. The other drivers hurried forward, followed by the Frenchmen and the German. The drivers began talking in an excited manner; the Frenchmen also joined in, and the German also. But as they all spoke in French, the boys did not understand a single word of what was said.

Their anxiety was terrible. More than ever they lamented now their unfortunate ignorance of all languages but their own. But the present moment was not a time for lamentation. Action was necessary, and that, too, instantaneous. Yet what could be done?

The drivers looked down carefully, and talked vehemently with one another, gesticulating all the time;—pointing down to the track of the avalanche; pointing to the fir grove; pointing down the road, up the road, everywhere; pointing to the distant Simplon village.

The two Frenchmen also took part in the discussion with great volubility, gesticulating incessantly.

The German also entered into the debate in a heavy, phlegmatic, guttural, German manner; waving his heavy German hands like two sledgehammers.

At last Uncle Zebedee could endure it no longer.

"What's the use," he cried, bawling at the top of his voice, as though he was speaking to deaf men, and could howl a knowledge of English into these foreigners, "what's the use of standin' here all day talkin'? Why don't ye do somethin'? Can't we go down after 'em? I'll go, at any rate."

Saying this, he prepared to descend the slippery declivity. Had he tried it, his manly form in a few minutes would have been some thousand feet or so below its present situation. But he didn't do it, for two of the drivers seized him,

and jerked him back just in time to save his life. Then they pointed down the declivity, and made wry faces.

Then they shook their heads very violently and emphatically.

"Then why don't you do it?" said Uncle Zebedee, indignantly. "Every moment's precious."

The drivers could not understand his words, but his eloquent face and his gestures they could understand. They at once began to bustle about. Each one rushed to his sled, and drew forth a coil of rope.

"Aha!" cried Uncle Zebedee, as he saw the ropes. "They've come prepared. They know somethin' might happen."

Then the three coils were all bound together. It seemed as though it ought to be long enough to reach down to the bottom of the slope. Then the drivers talked long and vociferously, and with multitudinous gestures, to the two Frenchmen and the German. They then made signs to Uncle Zebedee and the boys, by which they seemed to convey the idea that they were going down by means of the rope.

Noah's driver then bound the rope about his waist, and taking an iron pointed staff from the sled, prepared to descend. The other drivers also found iron-pointed staves in their sleds, and attaching the rope at a considerable distance from one another around their waists, they waited until the first driver had descended far enough to draw the rope straight. They then followed. They stepped slowly and cautiously over the treacherous surface, yet still went boldly down.

After the third driver had gone, Uncle Zebedee insisted on fastening the rope to himself and following. But the German shook his head vehemently, and tried to prevent him, pointing to the rope which he and the Frenchman were letting out as the drivers descended.

Noah also saw the utter futility of such an attempt on the part of one so ill prepared, and so incapable as Uncle Zebedee. He and Syd both fastened the rope around their waists, and implored Uncle Zebedee to stay behind and assist the Frenchmen.

Their entreaties made him change his mind, and he accordingly took his station with those who remained to manage the rope.

Slowly and cautiously the party of explorers went down. First went driver number one.

Then driver number two.

Then driver number three.

Then Syd.

Then Noah.

The rope was passed through the hands of the German. Frenchman number one guided it. Frenchman number two had the end fastened around his body. As for Uncle Zebedee he did not know what to do in particular, so he caught the rope, and taking his place between the German and the Frenchman, let it pass through his hands. In this way he satisfied somewhat his longings to do something for the rescue of the lost boys.

Downward, further and further, went the adventurous party, sometimes sinking in the snow, sometimes sliding over the crust. The leader directed his steps toward the point of the grove behind which the avalanche had hurled the sled and its occupants.

At length the Frenchmen and the German began to talk in anxious tones. There was cause for anxiety. The rope had been nearly all let out, and the foremost man was still a hundred feet, at least, above the line of trees.

What was to be done?

Uncle Zebedee could not understand the conversation, but he fully understood the difficulty of the occasion, and looked down with a quick-beating heart upon the enterprise that was to be thus baffled.

What was to be done?

The Frenchman around whose body the rope was bound proposed that they should let the rope go altogether. This was the only way by which the adventurers could be able to descend further. He insisted that there was no danger.

They could get down as far as the fir grove. They could support themselves from the trees and go down further. It was best, he thought, that the rope should be thrown to them so that they might make use of it for a further descent.

To this the German objected that if they should let the rope go they would not be able to draw them up again.

But the other Frenchman sustained the proposal of his countrymen. He thought the first necessity was that the men should get down. As to getting them up again, he suggested that one of them should drive off to the Simplon village, which was not far away, and get men and ropes.

The German, however, thought that if the rope should be let go, the whole party might be put in peril, particularly those who were nearest.

Syd and Noah were not more than half way

down, and the place where they stood was a glare of frozen snow where it was difficult to find a footing.

Before this argument was ended, the rope was all expended.

It was a critical moment.

They saw the first driver far down, and almost within reach of the fir grove, turn round and wave his hands vehemently. He found himself detained, and wanted to go on. The pull on the rope was tremendous. It required the utmost strength of the Frenchmen, and the German, and Uncle Zebedee to prevent themselves from being pulled away.

And now, at that critical moment, just as the Frenchman in his despair was about to loosen the rope, and literally "let the adventurers slide," a shout was heard down the road, not far away, which roused them in an instant. They turned, and

Chapter XXII.

Wonder of Wonders!—Harry, Tom and their Driver calmly advancing on their Sled—Utter Confusion and Bewilderment—Uncle Zebedee thinks they are "Sperrits," and refuses to believe his Eyes—Grand Collapse of Everybody—Explanations.

And wasn't that a wonder!

Astonishment deprived them of utterance. They stood with staring eyes as the sled approached, and said not one word. In their paralysis of amazement they were dragged toward the edge of the declivity, and it was only the necessity of saving themselves from being pulled over, that roused them from their stupor. Then their frantic efforts to retain their position distracted their minds for a time, and the new comers, seeing their situation, hurried forward and lent the aid of their strength. This additional assistance soon restored their firm foothold.

Thereupon the driver began to chatter to the Frenchmen and the German, while Harry and Tom explained it all to Uncle Zebedee.

They had been thrown down the slope and carried along with amazing speed till they reached an immense mass of soft snow which had accumulated in front of a grove far below the one in sight. Here they were partially buried up, but succeeded in extricating themselves.

One glance showed the driver where he was. A short distance below them was the Simplon road itself, in one of those windings which they had traversed not long before. In climbing the mountain it had to make a long circuit, and they had been thrown from the upper part of the road down the mountain side to the lower part. They soon got the horse and sled out of the snow heap, and descended to the road. Nobody had been injured beyond a few slight bruises, and they hurried up as fast as they could.

The other drivers must have known that the road lay below, but they could not have supposed that the sled had been carried so far. The grove where they had been stopped was much lower down than the one in sight, and one or two precipices lay between. Had the snow not been so deep their lives would certainly have been lost, and so there had been every reason for the deep anxiety which had been felt.

The adventurers below recognized, to their amazement, the forms of the returned victims of the avalanche, and the new help thus arrived formed a sufficient addition of strength to draw up without much difficulty those who had gone down.

Chapter XXIII.

A Happy Reunion and a Happy Conclusion.

They resumed their journey. For the rest of the way they met with no adventures. They passed the mountains and reached Brig by evening. On the next day they came to Villa Neuf, at the end of Lake Leman, and from this place they went by steamer to Geneva. There they found their friends waiting for them, and this reunion was made all the pleasanter by the memory of their past adventures.